

May 15, 1997



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Mr. Dick Daniel
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Dick:

I am responding to your draft of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecological Zone - Restoration Plan. At this time I am making a few general comments as follows:

1. The proposed measure to delay the increase of fall exports for some period of time to give the Estuary the opportunity to enjoy the first fall freshet not only makes sense for fish, but will yield important salinity benefits for water exporters and in-Delta users as well. The trick is to leave the Delta Cross Channel open as long as it does not create a fish problem in order that the interior of the Delta will become freshened to the greatest extent possible. Letting X2 reach Chipps Island prior to increasing export rates may be a good trigger mechanism for a ten-day period.
2. Building setback levees over deep peat or soft clay soils will prove to be very expensive and time consuming. Because of that, you may want to rethink how this feature of your plan may play out in the Central and Western Delta. On the other hand, building setback levees on mineral soil, especially when the ground level is not particularly low, will be relatively easy to accomplish.
3. Your desire to maintain low water temperatures in the Delta, yet expand the area of relatively shallow flooded habitat, serves two independent purposes, but conflicts arise between the two goals during the summer months. My understanding is that once fish are acclimated to typical Delta water temperatures they can probably withstand the minor additional increased temperatures that might be the result of adding additional shallow water habitat to the mosaic of habitat types.
4. There are multiple benefits associated with certain dredger cut fill projects. They will reduce seepage, improve stability for the existing levees and, at the same time, create shallow water habitat.

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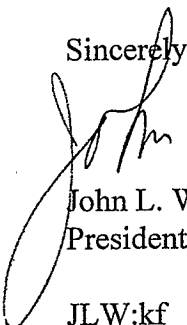
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5. Eventually an important challenge that will face you and others in the CALFED program is to affix a cost benefit ratio for the various habitat types. Shaded riverine habitat adjacent to Delta islands will be very expensive compared to the development of emergent vegetation adjacent to existing levees.

I hope these comments are of use to you.

Sincerely,


John L. Winther
President

JLW:kf